



JOSEPH PAXTON CAMPUS

Wirral Hospitals' School
"Working together to make everything better"
An Ofsted "Outstanding" School

Headteacher: Mr P Arrowsmith

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1st March 2024

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you regarding my concern over the small number of families who are taking unauthorised holidays in term time. You may already be aware that this is an issue that has recently been highlighted by the DfE and the cost of fixed penalty notices is increasing.

As a Local Authority School, we adhere to Wirral LA's policy on unauthorised term time holidays. In particular, the LA policy states that "Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Attendance below 90% with at least 10 days lost due to unauthorised absence. These do not need to be consecutive.
- **5 days or more unauthorised absence due to holidays in term time.**
- Pupils stopped on Police Truancy Sweeps in some circumstances, for example, if this is repeated.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of a school exclusion without good reason.
- A pupil arrives late after the registers are closed (using a code U) on 10 or more separate occasions."

This means that if a child is taken on holiday without permission for 5 days or more, schools can ask Local Authorities to issue a Warning Letter or a Fixed Penalty Notice **regardless of the child's overall attendance.**

Please be aware, at Wirral Hospitals' School we always strive for the highest possible attendance for all of our students, given the context of their health needs. However, we also recognise the difficulty many of our students face in relation to taking holidays during the busy national school holiday periods and are happy to help in these circumstances. Any request to take a student out of school during term time for a family holiday **must be made in writing, explaining why it is necessary, and at least two weeks before the first day of intended absence.** Holidays should not be booked or paid for until such requests have been made and discussed.

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As Headteacher, I retain the right to consider “Exceptional Circumstances” where there is a genuine need to take a student on a family during term time and where there are clear benefits to the young person’s mental health in doing so. We will continue to support our parents and families as much as possible where there is a genuine need to take holidays outside of the usual school holiday periods. However, the maximum amount of time I can authorise in these circumstances is ten days per school year. In addition, any holiday during Year 11 is highly unlikely to be authorised and, in particular, any holiday that interferes with your child’s GCSE exams will result in us requesting that the LA issue the family with a fixed penalty notice.

Please don’t hesitate to contact the school if you have questions or concerns regarding this issue. I look forward to us all continuing to work together to ensure the best possible attendance and successful outcomes for all our students.

Yours sincerely,



Phill Arrowsmith
Headteacher

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